

# Employee FRONTLINE

A newsletter from the WA State Employee Assistance Program

## Vital Nutrients: Are You Missing Any?



A recent study found Americans are lacking several nutrients vital to maintaining good health and helping prevent serious illness. Are you at risk? Women in particular are lacking calcium for good bone health. You can get it from dark, leafy vegetables; dairy products; and finfish. Fiber is also missing from diets. Get it from vegetables,

fruits, legumes, and nuts. Fiber promotes good heart health and cuts your chances of developing diabetes. Magnesium helps you maintain healthy muscle and nerve function, and it helps in bone development. Get yours from bran, nuts, seeds, and fish like halibut. Make sure you get plenty of potassium to help keep blood pressure in check. Good sources include bananas and yogurt.

## Romance at Work?

Romantic relationships between coworkers are legendary for their unique stress. While your feet are still on the ground, consider a self-analysis to empower you to make the right choice before beginning a romance at work. Start with the following questions: Will the relationship adversely affect either of you professionally? Depending on your positions, is the relationship ethical? Will you keep it secret? This often increases stress. Could the relationship force a transfer to another part of the organization? Does either of you possess vital company information that can't be shared? If personal issues arise, will they affect your work? How will you manage inevitable criticism by others? Some employers have policies prohibiting romantic relationships. Does yours? If your relationship ends, will you be able to remain cordial and professional?



## Stand Up for Productivity

Here's a new twist on more productive business meetings—don't sit down. A recent study found that people get more done in meetings if they avoid sitting in chairs. The study found that when people stood up for meetings, they got more excited about the creative process, became more collaborative, and were less likely to "protect turf" or withhold ideas. Even small changes that allowed people to stand rather than sit throughout the day were found to be beneficial in terms of both productivity and fitness. If you're physically able, try removing the chairs and experiment with this productivity enhancement discovery.

## Manage Stress to Protect Your Memory

Many factors may contribute to memory loss as we age, but researchers continue to make news by understanding the harm and impact of cortisol, a stress hormone. It's critical to our "fight or flight" survival but damaging to the brain, with chronic exposure resulting from relentless and acute stress. The following interventions reduce cortisol: reducing caffeine; drinking water to stay hydrated; reducing processed foods, white bread, candy, cakes, and non-whole-wheat pasta; drinking black tea; and eating more fish. Even meditation has been shown to reduce cortisol levels.



# Frontline Employee

## Volunteering as a Family



Teach your kids the value of helping others this summer by participating in family volunteer opportunities. Volunteering as a family is a powerful way to increase self-confidence and self-esteem in children and teens while passing on the value of

community giving. Working together as a family also brings you closer together. You can find community projects for your family in a variety of places, like churches, your favorite charity, or hospitals. Consider a one-time event before you commit to an ongoing project. Look for projects that match your family's interest level and skill. Pet lovers can volunteer at the local animal shelter. If you are handy with tools, try giving an organization like Habitat for Humanity a call. Gardeners can help keep a park or roadway looking beautiful. Go to <http://www.volunteermatch.org> to locate volunteer opportunities in your area.

## Overcoming Emotional Impact of Physical Illness

When you're diagnosed with a serious medical condition, both emotional effects and physical symptoms will contribute to your distress, and the emotional part can be the more difficult. It's normal to have negative



feelings about your diagnosis, including anger, fear, depression, and guilt, but working through these feelings will help you better manage your condition and possibly improve your prognosis. Indeed, studies have shown that managing difficult feelings and emotions can develop hope, something critical in overcoming a serious condition. Talk about your anger with the people you love. Anger can mask other feelings, like fear, and talking with patient, loving listeners will help you find solutions to what's troubling you the most. Overcome fear by learning all you can about your condition, the treatment options, and ways to cope with it. And don't try to soldier through depression. Ask your doctor about medication, or see a professional counselor for support. Don't overlook the idea of a support group. Hundreds of support groups exist for almost every medical condition, and even online forums can provide you with a surprising level of support if you can't locate a specific type of group nearby. The right one can be the most powerful coping strategy of all.

## Take a Memorable "Staycation"

You can have an awesome stay-at-home vacation, but planning is the key. Structure the week and get it all down on paper. With no plan, you slip into habits like plopping in front of the TV, surfing the Web, and dilly-dallying in the morning, eating up the day before finally getting in gear. Visit your local travel information center and AAA travel office to see what's new. They'll have the latest scoop on one-day events, specials, and new offerings. Pack it all in—from breakfast at the park to evening ice cream outings with great activities in between. Don't forget the camera .

## In Search of Enthusiastic Employees

If there is one thing employers desire, it's enthusiastic employees. Some will hire employees with less experience just to get more enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is infectious in the same way a bad attitude can affect others, and it inspires a host of other positives, like engagement, cooperation, innovation, high productivity, and fun at work. Demonstrate enthusiasm by doing what you are asked, doing it without delay, and doing it the way your boss wants it done. Pitch in to do things others avoid. When your supervisor asks who would like to volunteer to straighten the staff kitchen, raise your hand. See problems as "opportunities" first, not roadblocks designed to make life unhappy. Think a little bit like an entrepreneur when problems arise in order to discover solutions faster. And demonstrate loyalty. Avoid gossip about your supervisor (or others), and steer conversations away from gossip. Adopt these tips and your career may skyrocket along with your love of the job.